



Mary C. Roberts
Director

Testimony of Mary C. Roberts
Director of CT Federation of Catholic School Parents

Environment Committee
March 17, 2013

S.B. 443, "An Act Concerning Pesticides on School Grounds, Parks, Playgrounds, Athletic Fields and Municipal Greens."

Good Morning, Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile and other distinguished members of the Environment Committee, my name is Mary Roberts and I am the Director of the CT Federation of Catholic School Parents. I appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments in opposition to SB 443, *"An Act Concerning Pesticides on School Grounds, Parks, Playgrounds, Athletic Fields and Municipal Greens."*

Our opposition to SB 443 is based upon the fact that it is already extremely expensive for Catholic high schools to maintain their grounds and athletic fields for student activities and sports. If pesticides are completely prohibited, it is likely that our grounds and athletic fields may quickly fall into irreversible disrepair.

There are 113 Catholic schools, including 18 high schools in Connecticut, with enrollment of close to 30,000 students. Unlike many of the public high schools, very few Catholic high schools can afford to have "astro-turf" fields for their athletic events. The groundskeepers at Catholic high schools work very hard with limited funds to maintain the natural grounds and athletic fields for outdoor activities and athletic events. The provisions of this bill would make their jobs even more difficult.

Every day, Catholic schools in Connecticut fight to keep the tuition down for our 30,000 families. And our schools save taxpayers in Connecticut about \$400, 000 million each year in education costs because our students are not attending public schools.

We respectfully request that the members of the Environment Committee do not move forward with extending the ban on the use of lawn care pesticides in schools to include schools with students in grades nine to twelve in 2017, and applying current restrictions concerning the application of lawn pesticides at school grounds to the application of pesticides at parks, playgrounds, athletic fields and municipal greens.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our position.

Mary C. Roberts
Director
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents